

THE
DOCTRINE
OF
ORIGINAL SIN.

Extracted from a late AUTHOR.



L O N D O N:

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T H E

Doctrīne of Original Sin.

GOD made man upright. By man we are to understand our first parents, the archetypal pair, the root of mankind. This man was made right (agreeably to the nature of God, whose work is perfect) without any imperfection, corruption, or principle of corruption in his body or soul. He was made upright, that is, straight with the will and law of God, without any irregularity in his soul. God made him thus; he did not first make him, and then make him righteous: but in the very making of him he made him righteous; righteousness was concreated with him. With the same breath that God breathed in him a living soul, he breathed in him a righteous soul.

This righteousness was, the conformity of all the faculties and powers of his soul to the moral law: which implied three things.

First, his understanding was a lamp of light. He was made after God's image, and consequently could not want knowledge, which is a part thereof. And a perfect knowledge of the law was necessary to fit him for universal obedience, seeing no obedience can be according to the law, unless it proceed from a sense of the command of God requiring it. It is true, Adam had not the law writ on tables of stone: but it was written upon his mind. God imprest it upon his soul, and made him a law to himself, as the remains of it even among the Heathens testify. And seeing man was made to be the mouth of the creation, to glorify God in his works, we have ground to believe, he had an exquisite knowledge of the works of God. We have a proof of this in his giving names to the beasts of the field,

field, and the fowls of the air, and these such as express their nature. Whatsoever Adam called every living thing, that was the name thereof. And the dominion which God gave him over the creatures, soberly to use them according to his will (still in subordination to the will of God) implies a knowledge of their natures.

Secondly, His will lay straight with the will of God. There was no corruption in his will, no bent or inclination to evil; for that is sin, properly so called; and therefore inconsistent with that uprightness, with which it is expressly said he was endued at his creation. The will of man was then naturally inclined to God and goodness, though mutably. It was disposed by its original make, to follow the Creator's will, as the shadow does the body. It was not left in an equal balance to good and evil; for then he had not been upright, or conformable to the law; which no more can allow the creature, not to be inclined to God as his end, any more than it can allow man to be a god to himself.

Thirdly, His affections were regular, pure and holy. All his passions, yea all his sensitive motions and inclinations, were subordinate to his reason and will, which lay straight with the will of God. They were all therefore pure from all defilement, free from all disorder or distemper; because in all their motions they were duly subjected to his clear reason and his holy will. He had also an executive power, answerable to his will: a power to do the good which he knew should be done, and which he inclined to do; even to fulfil the whole law of God. If it had not been so, God would not have required perfect obedience of him. For to say that *The Lord gathereth where he hath not strewed*, is but the blasphemy of a slothful servant.

From what has been said it may be gathered, that man's original righteousness was universal and natural, yet mutable.

1. It was universal, both with respect to the subject of it, the whole man, and the object of it, the

whole law : it was diffused through the whole man ; it was a blessed leaven that leavened the whole lump. Man was then holy in soul, body and spirit : while the soul remained untainted, the members of the body were consecrated vessels, and instruments of righteousness. A combat between reason and appetite, nay the least inclination to sin, was utterly inconsistent with this uprightness in which man was created ; and has been invented to veil the corruption of man's nature, and to obscure the grace of God in Christ Jesus. And as this righteousness spread through the whole man, so it respected the whole law. There was nothing in the law, but what was agreeable to his reason and will. His soul was shapen out, in length and breadth, to the commandment, though exceeding broad : so that his original righteousness was not only perfect in parts but in degrees.

2. As it was universal, so it was natural to him. He was created with it. And it was necessary to the perfection of man, as he came out of the hand of God : necessary to constitute him in a state of integrity. Yet

3. It was mutable. It was a righteousness which might be lost, as appears from the sad event. His will was not indifferent to good and evil : God set it towards good only, yet did not so fix it, that it could not alter ; it was moveable to evil ; but by man himself only.

Thus was man made *originally righteous, being created in God's own image, Gen. i. 27. which consists in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24. All that God made was very good, according to their several natures, Gen. i. 31. And so man was morally good, being made after the image of him who is good and upright, Psal. xxv. 8.* Without this, he could not have answered the end of his creation, which was to know, love and serve his God. Nay, he could not be created otherwise, For he must either have been conformable to the law in his powers, principles and inclinations, or not. If he

he was, he was righteous: if not, he was a sinner, which is absurd and horrible to imagine.

And as man was holy, so he was happy. He was full of peace as well as of love. And he was the favourite of heaven. He bore the image of God, who cannot but love his own image. While he was alone in the world, he was not alone; for he had free, full communion with God. As yet there was nothing to turn away the face of God from the work of his own hands: seeing sin had not as yet entered, which alone could make the breach.

He was also Lord of the world, Universal Emperor of the whole earth. His Creator gave him *Dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and every thing that moveth on the earth.* He was God's Deputy-Governor in the lower world: and this his dominion was an image of God's sovereignty. Thus was man crowned with glory and honour, *having all things put under his feet.*

Again; as he had tranquillity in his own breast, so he had a perfect calm without. His heart had nothing to reproach him with, and without, there was nothing to annoy him. His beautiful body was not capable of injuries from the air. It was liable to no diseases or pains: and though he was not to live idle, yet toil, weariness and sweat of the brows, was not known in this state.

Lastly, He was immortal. He would never have died if he had not sinned. Death was threatened only in case of sin. The perfect constitution of his body, which came out of God's hand very good, and the righteousness of his soul removed all inward causes of death. And God's special care of his innocent creature secured him against outward violence. Such were the holiness and the happiness of man in his original state.

But there is now a sad alteration in our nature. It is now entirely corrupted. Where at first there was nothing evil, there is now nothing good. I shall,

First, prove this:

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Secondly,

Secondly, Represent this corruption in its several parts.

Thirdly, Shew how man's nature comes to be thus corrupted.

First, I shall prove both by God's word, and by men's experience and observation, that man's nature is corrupted.

I. For proof from God's word, let us consider,

1. How it takes particular notice of fallen Adam's communicating his image to his posterity. Gen. v. 3. *Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image.* Compare this with ver. 1. *In the day that God created man, in the image of God made he him.* Behold here, how the image after which man was made, and the image after which he is begotten are opposed. Man was made in the likeness of God; a holy and righteous God made a holy and righteous creature: but fallen Adam begat a son, not in the likeness of God, but in his own likeness: corrupt, sinful Adam begat a corrupt, sinful son. For as the image of God included righteousness and immortality, so this image of fallen Adam, included corruption and death. Moses giving us in this chapter the first bill of mortality that ever was in the world, ushers it with this observation, that dying Adam begat mortals. Having sinned, he became mortal, according to the threatening. And so he begat a son in his own likeness: sinful, and therefore mortal; and so sin and death passed on all.

2. Let us consider, that text: Job xiv. 4, *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.* Our first parents were unclean; how then can we be clean? How could our immediate parents be clean? Or how shall our children be so? The uncleanness here mentioned is a sinful uncleanness: for it is such as makes man's days full of trouble. And it is natural, being derived from unclean parents. *How can he be clean that is born of a woman? God can bring a clean thing out of an unclean; and did so in the case of the man, Christ; but no other can.* Every person then that is born according to the
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the course of nature is born unclean: if the root be corrupt so are the branches. Neither is the matter mended, though the parents be holy. For they are such by grace, not by nature: and they beget their children as men, not as holy men: wherefore as the circumcised parent begets an uncircumcised child, so the holiest parents beget unholy children, and cannot communicate their grace to them as they do their nature.

3. Hear our Lord's determination of the point, John iii. 6. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh.* Behold, the corruption of all mankind; all are flesh. It does not mean, all are frail (though that is a sad truth too: yea, and our natural frailty is an evidence of our natural corruption;) but, all are corrupt and sinful, and that naturally. Hence our Lord argues, that because they are *flesh*, therefore *they must be born again, or they cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, ver. 3. 5. And as the corruption of our nature evidences the absolute necessity of regeneration, so the necessity of regeneration proves the corruption of our nature. For why should a man need a second birth, if his nature were not ruined in the first birth? Even infants must be born again; for this rule admits of no exception. And therefore they were circumcised under the Old Testament; as having the body of the sins of the flesh (which is conveyed to them by natural generation) the whole old man, to put off. Col. ii. 11. And now by the appointment of Christ, they are to be baptized; which shews they are unclean, and that there is no salvation for them, but by the *washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*.

4. *We are by nature children of wrath.* We are worthy of, and liable to the wrath of God: and that by nature: and therefore doubtless we are by nature sinful creatures. We are condemned before we have done good or evil; under the curse ere we know what it is. *But will a lion roar in the forest while he hath no prey? Will a holy and just*
God

God roar in his wrath against man, if he be not by his sin made a prey for wrath? No, he will not, he cannot. We conclude then, that according to the word of God, man's nature is a corrupt nature.

II. If we consult experience, and observe the case of the world, in the things that are obvious to any person, we shall by its fruits easily discover the root of bitterness. I shall instance but in a few.

1. Who sees not a flood of miseries overflowing the world? Every one at home and abroad, in city and country, in palaces and cottages, is groaning under some unpleasing circumstance or other. Some are oppressed with poverty or want, some chastened with pain or sickness: some are lamenting their losses; none is without a cross of one sort or another. No man's condition is so soft, but there is some thorn of uneasiness in it. And at length, death, the wages of sin, comes and sweeps all away. Now what but sin has opened, the sluice? There is not a complaint or sigh heard in the world, or a tear that falls from our eye, but it is an evidence, that man is fallen as a star from heaven. *For God distributeth sorrows in his anger, Job. xxi. 17.* This is a plain proof of the corruption of nature: forasmuch as those that have not actually sinned, have their share of these sorrows; yea, and draw their first breath weeping. There are also graves of the smallest as well as the largest size: and there are never wanting some in the world, who like *Rachel, are weeping for their children, because they are not.*

2. How early does this corruption of nature appear? It is soon discerned, which way the bias of the heart lies. Do not the children of fallen Adam, before they can go alone, follow their father's footsteps? What pride, ambition, curiosity, vanity, wilfulness and averseness to good appears in them? And when they creep out of infancy, there is a necessity of using *the rod of correction, to drive away the foolishness that is bound in their heart.*

3. Take

3. Take a view of the outbreakings of sin in the world. *The wickedness of man is yet great in the earth.* Behold the bitter fruits of corrupt nature! *By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out* (like the breaking forth of waters) *and blood touched blood.* The world is filled with all manner of filthiness, wickedness and impiety. And whence is this deluge of sin on the earth, but from the breaking of the fountains of the great deep, *the heart of man*, out of which proceed *adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness.* Ye may, it may be, thank God, that ye are not in these respects, like other men. And you have reason; for the corruption of nature, is the very same in you, as in them.

4. Cast your eye upon those terrible convulsions the world is thrown into by the wickedness of men. Lions prey not on lions, nor wolves on wolves; but men bite and devour one another. Upon how slight occasions will men sheath their swords in one another's bowels? Since Cain shed Abel's blood, the world has been turned into a slaughter-house. And the chase has been continued ever since Nimrod began his hunting: as on the earth so in the seas, the greater still devouring the lesser. Now when we see the world in such a ferment, every one stabbing another with words or swords: these violent heats among the sons of Adam, speak the whole body to be distempered; *the whole head to be sick, and the whole heart faint.*

5. Consider the necessity of human laws, fenced with terrors and severities. Man was made for society; and God himself said when he created him, it was not good for him to be alone. Yet the case is such now, that in society, he must be hedged in with thorns. And that from hence we may the better discern the corruption of man's nature, consider 1. Every man naturally loves to be at full liberty himself; and were he to follow his inclination, would vote himself out of the reach of all laws, divine and human: yet 2. No man would willingly
adventure

adventure to live in a lawless society: and therefore even pirates and robbers have laws among themselves. Thus men shew they are conscious of the corruption of nature, not daring to trust one another but upon security. 3. How dangerous soever it is to break through the hedge, yet many will do it daily. They will not only sacrifice their conscience and credit, but for the pleasure of a few moments, lay themselves open to a violent death, by the laws of the land wherein they live. 4. Laws are often made to yield to man's lusts. Sometimes whole societies break off the fetters, and the voice of laws cannot be heard for the noise of arms. And seldom there is a time, wherein there are not some persons so great and daring, that the laws dare not look them in the face. 5. Observe even the Israelites, separated to God from all the nations of the earth. Yet what horrible confusions were among them, when *there was no King in Israel*? How hard was it to reform them, when they had the best of Magistrates? And how quickly did they turn aside again, when they had wicked Rulers? It seems one grand design of that sacred history, was to discover the corruption of man's nature.

6. Consider the remains of natural corruption even in them that believe. Though grace has entered, corruption is not expelled; they find it with them at all times and in all places. If a man have an ill neighbour he may remove: but should he go into a wilderness, or pitch his tent on a remote rock in the sea, there it will be with him. I need not stand to prove so clear a point. But consider these few things on this head. 1. If it be thus in the green tree, how must it be in the dry? Does so much of the old remain even in those who have received a new nature? How great then must that corruption be in those, where it is unmixed with renewing grace! 2. Though natural corruption is no burthen to a natural man, is he therefore free from it? No, no. Only he is dead, and feels not the

the sinking weight. Many a groan is heard from a sick-bed, but never one from a grave. 3. The good man resists the old nature: he strives to starve it; yet it remains. How must it spread and strengthen itself in the soul, where it is not starved, but fed, as in unbelievers? If the garden of the diligent find him full work, in cutting off and rooting up, surely that of the sluggard must needs be *all grown over with thorns.*

I shall add but one observation more, that in every man naturally the image of fallen Adam appears; to evince which, I appeal to the consciences of all, in the following particulars.

1. If God by his holy law or wise providence put a restraint upon us, to keep us back from any thing, does not that restraint whet the edge of our natural inclinations, and make us so much the keener in our desires? The very Heathens were convinced, that there is this spirit of contradiction in us, though they knew not the spring of it. How often do men give themselves a loose in those things, wherein if God had left them at liberty, they would have bound up themselves? And is not this a repeating of our father's folly, that men will rather climb for forbidden fruit, than gather what Providence offers to them, when they have God's express allowance for it?

2. Is it not natural to us, to care for the body, at the expence of the soul? This was one ingredient in the sin of our first parents, Gen. iii. 6. Oh how happy might we be, if we were but at half the pains about our souls, which we bestow upon our bodies? If that question, *What must I do to be saved*, did but run near so oft through our minds, as those, *What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

3. Is not every one by nature discontented with his present lot, or with some one thing or other in it? Some one thing is always missing; so that man is a creature given to change. If any doubt of this, let them look over all their enjoyments, and after
a review

a review of them, listen to their own hearts, and they will hear a secret murmuring, for want of something. Since the hearts of our first parents wandered from God, their posterity have a natural disease which Solomon calls, *The wandering of desire*, literally, *The walking of the soul*, Eccles. vi. 9. This is a sort of diabolical trance, wherein the soul traverseth the world, feeds itself with a thousand airy nothings, snatcheth at this and the other imagined excellency: goes here and there and every where, except where it should go. And the soul is never cured of this disease, till it takes up its rest in God through Christ.

4. Do not Adam's children naturally follow his footsteps, in *hiding themselves from the presence of the Lord*? Gen. iii. 8. We are just as blind in this matter as he was, who thought to *hide himself from the presence of the Lord among the trees of the garden*. We promise ourselves more security in a secret sin, than one that is openly committed. *The adulterer saith, No eye shall see me*. And men will freely do that in secret, which they would be ashamed to do in the presence of a child: as if darkness could hide from an all-seeing God. Are we not naturally *careless of communion with God*? Nay, and averse to it? Never was there any communion between God and Adam's children, where God himself had not the first word. If he would let them alone, they would never enquire after him.

5. How loth are men to confess sin, to take guilt and shame to themselves? And was it not thus in the case before us? Adam confesses his nakedness, (which indeed he could not deny) but not one word does he say about sin. It is as natural for us to hide sin as to commit it. Many instances of this we see daily; but how many will there be in that day, when *God will judge the secrets of men*. Many a foul mouth will then be seen, which is now *wiped and saith, I have done no wickedness*.

Lastly,

Lastly, Is it not natural for us to extenuate our sin, and transfer the guilt to others? As Adam laid the blame of his sin on the woman: and did not the woman lay the blame on the serpent? Adam's children need not be taught this: for before they can well speak, if they cannot deny, they lisp out something to lessen their fault, and lay the blame upon another. Nay so natural is this to men, that in the greatest of sins they will charge the fault on God himself: blaspheming his providence under the name of ill-luck or misfortune, and so laying the blame of their sin at heaven's door. Thus does *the foolishness of man pervert his ways*; and his heart fretteth against the Lord. Let us then call Adam, Father: let us not deny the relation, seeing we bear his image.

I proceed to enquire into the corruption of nature in the several parts of it. But who can take the exact dimensions of it, in its breadth, length, height, and depth? *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?* However we may quickly perceive so much of it, as may shew the absolute necessity of regeneration. Man in his natural state is altogether corrupt, thro' all the faculties of his soul: corrupt in his understanding, his will, his affections, his conscience and his memory.

I. The understanding is despoiled of its primitive glory, and covered over with confusion. We are fallen into the hands of our grand Adversary, and are deprived of our two eyes. *There is none that understandeth*; the *very mind and conscience* of the natural-man are defiled or spoiled. But to point out this corruption of the understanding more particularly, let the following things be considered.

First, There is a natural weakness in the minds of men, with respect to spiritual things. How hard is it to teach them the common principles of religion, to make truths so plain, that they may understand them? Try the same persons in other things, speak of the things of this world, and they will

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understand

understand quickly: but it is hard to make them know, how their souls may be saved, or how their hearts may find rest in Christ. Consider even those who have many advantages above the common run of mankind: yet how small is their knowledge of divine things! What confusion still remains in their mind? How often are they mired, and speak as a child, even in the matter of practical truths? It is a pitiable weakness, that we cannot perceive the things which God has revealed. And it must needs be a sinful weakness, since the law of God requires us to know and believe them.

Secondly, Man's understanding is naturally overwhelmed with gross darkness in spiritual things. Man, at the instigation of the devil, attempting to break out a new light in his mind, instead of that, broke up the doors of the bottomless pit, by the smoky whereof he was covered with darkness. When God at first made man, his mind was a lamp of light: but sin has now turned it into darkness. Sin has closed the window of the soul. It is the land of darkness and the shadow of death, where *the light is as darkness*. The Prince of darkness reigns therein, and nothing but the works of darkness are framed there. That you may be the more fully convinced of this, take the following evidences of it.

1. The darkness that was upon the face of the world before, and at the time that Christ came. When Adam by his sin had lost light, it pleased God to reveal to him the way of salvation, Gen. iii. 15. This was handed down by holy men before the flood: yet the unnatural darkness of the mind of man so prevailed, as to carry off all sense of true religion from the old world, except what remained in Noah's family. After the flood, as men increased, their natural darkness of mind prevailed again, and the light decayed, till it died out among the generality of mankind, and was preserved only among the posterity of Shem. And even with them it was near setting, when God called *Abraham*
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*from serving other gods, Josh. xxiv. 15. God gave him a more full revelation, which he communicated to his family, Gen. xviii. 19. Yet the natural darkness wore it out at length, save that it was preserved among the posterity of Jacob. In Egypt that darkness so prevailed over them also, that a new revelation was necessary. And many a dark cloud got above that, during the time from Moses to Christ. When Christ came, nothing was to be seen in the gentile world, but darkness and cruel habitations. They were drowned in superstition and idolatry: and whatever wisdom was among their Philosophers, the world by that wisdom knew not God, but became more and more vain in their imaginations. Nor were the Jews much wiser: except a few, gross darkness covered them also. Their traditions were multiplied; but the knowledge of those things wherein the life of religion lies, was lost. They gloried in outward ordinances; but knew nothing of *worshipping God in spirit and in truth.**

Now what but the natural darkness of mens minds, could still wear out the light of external revelation? Men did not forget the way of preserving their lives: but how quickly did they forget the way of saving their souls? So that it was necessary for God himself to reveal it again and again. Yea, and a mere revelation did not suffice to remove this darkness: no, not when it was made by Christ in person: there needed also the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Such is the natural darkness of our minds, that it only yields to the blood and Spirit of Christ.

2. Every natural man's heart, how refined soever he appears, is full of darkness, disorder and confusion. The unrefreshed part of mankind are rambling through the world, like so many blind men, who will neither take a guide, nor can guide themselves, and therefore fall over this and the other precipice into destruction. Some are running after their covetousness, some sticking in the

mire of sensuality, others dashing on the rock of pride: every one stumbling on one stone of stumbling or other, as their unmortified passions drive them. And while some are lying along in the way, others are coming up and falling headlong over them. Errors swarm in the world: all the unregenerate are utterly mistaken in the point of true happiness. All desire to be happy; but touching the way to happiness, there are almost as many opinions as there are men. They are like the blind Sodomites about Lot's house, all seeking to find the door, but in vain. Look into thine own heart, (if thou art not born again) and thou wilt see all turned upside down; heaven lying under and earth a-top: look into thy life, and see how thou art playing the madman, eagerly flying after that which is not, and flighting that which is, and will be for ever. Thus is man's understanding naturally overwhelmed with gross darkness in spiritual things.

Thirdly, There is in the mind of man a natural bias to evil: let us reflect a little, and we shall find incontestable evidence of it.

1. Men's minds have a natural dexterity to do mischief: none are so simple as to want skill for this. None need to be taught it; but as weeds without being sown, grow up of their own accord, so does this *earthly, sensual, devilish wisdom*, naturally grow up in us.

2. We naturally form gross conceptions of spiritual things, as if the soul were quite immersed in flesh and blood. Let men but look into themselves, and they will find this bias in their minds: whereof the idolatry which still prevails so far and wide, is an incontestable evidence. For it plainly shews, men would have a visible deity; therefore they change *the glory of the incorruptible God into an image*. Indeed the reformation of these nations, has banished gross idolatry out of our churches. But heart-reformation alone can banish mental-idolatry, subtle and refined image-worship out of our minds.

3. How

3. How difficult is it, to detain the carnal mind before the Lord? To fix it in the meditation of spiritual things? When God is speaking to men by his word, or they are speaking to him in prayer, the body remains before God, but the world steals away the heart. Though the eyes be closed, the man sees a thousand vanities, and the mind roves hither and thither: and many times the man scarce comes to himself, till he is *gone from the presence of the Lord*. The worldly man's mind does not wander, when he is contriving business, casting up his accounts, or telling his money. If he answers you not at first, he tells you, he did not hear you, he was busy, his mind was fixed. But the carnal mind, employed about spiritual things, is out of its element, and therefore cannot fix.

4. Consider how the carnal imagination supplies the want of real objects to the corrupt heart. The unclean person is filled with speculative impurities, having eyes full of adultery. The covetous man fills his heart with the world, if he cannot get his hands full of it. The malicious person acts his revenge in his own breast; the envious, within his own narrow soul, sees his neighbour laid low enough: and so every lust is fed by the imagination. These things may suffice to convince us, of the natural bias of the mind to evil.

Fourthly, There is in the carnal mind an opposition to spiritual truths, and an aversion to the receiving of them. God has revealed to sinners the way of salvation; he has given his word. But do natural men believe it? Indeed they do not. They believe not the promises of the word: for they who receive them are thereby made *partakers of the divine nature*. They believe not the threatenings of the word: otherwise they could not live as they do. I doubt not but most, if not all of you, who are in a state of nature, will here plead, not guilty. But the very difficulty you find in assenting to this truth, proves the unbelief with which I charge you. Has it not proceeded so far with some, that it has

steeled their foreheads, openly to reject all revealed religion? And though ye set not your mouths as they do against the heavens, yet the same bitter root of unbelief is in you, and reigns and will reign in you till overcoming grace captivate your minds to the belief of the truth. To convince you of this

Consider 1. How have you learned those truths which you think you believe? It is not merely by the benefit of your education, and of external revelation? You are strangers to the inward work of the holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in your hearts: and so you cannot have the *assurance of faith*, even with respect to the outward revelation. And therefore ye are still unbelievers. *It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every one therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, saith our Lord, cometh unto me. But ye have not come to Christ: therefore ye have not been taught of God. Ye have not been so taught, and therefore ye have not come: ye believe not.*

Consider, 2. The utter inconsistency of most men's lives with the principles which they profess. They profess to believe the scripture: but how little are they concerned about what is revealed therein? How unconcerned are ye even about that weighty point, whether ye be born again, or not? Many live as they were born, and are like to die as they live, and yet live in peace. Do such believe the sinfulness of a natural state? Do they believe they are *children of wrath*? Do they believe there is no salvation without regeneration? and no regeneration but what makes man a *new creature*? O no! if ye did, ye could not live in your sins, live out of Christ, and yet hope for mercy.

Fifthly, Man is naturally high-minded. Lowliness is not a flower which grows in the field of nature. It is natural to man to think highly of himself and what is his own. *Vain man would be wise:*

wise : so he accounts himself, and so he would be accounted by others. His way is right, because it is his own: for *every way of a man is right in his own eyes*. He is *alive without the law*; and therefore his hope is strong and his confidence firm. It is another tower of Babel: the word batters it, yet it stands. One while breaches are made in it, but they are quickly repaired. At another time, it is all made to shake; but it is still kept up: till God's Spirit raise an heart-quake within the man, which tumbles it down, and leaves not one stone upon another.

Thus much of the corruption of the understanding. Call the understanding *Ichabod*; for *the glory is departed from it*. Consider this, ye that are yet in the state of nature, and groan ye out your case before the Lord, that the Sun of Righteousness may arise upon you, before ye be shut up in utter darkness. What avails your worldly wisdom? What do all your attainments in religion avail, while your understanding lies wrapt up in darkness and confusion, utterly void of the light of life?

II. Nor is the Will less corrupted than the Understanding. It was at first faithful, and ruled with God: but now it is turned traitor against God, and rules with and for the devil. To open this plague of the heart, let the following things be considered.

First, There is in the unrenewed will, an utter inability for what is truly good in the sight of God. Indeed a natural man has a power to chuse and do what is materially good: but though he can will what is good and right, he can do nothing aright and well. *Without me*, that is, separate from me, *ye can do nothing*; nothing truly and spiritually good. To evidence this, consider

1. How often do men see the good they should chuse, and the evil they should refuse: and yet their hearts have no more power to comply with their light, than if they were arrested by some invisible

visible hand? Their consciences tell them the right way: yet cannot their will be brought up to it. Else how is it that the clear arguments on the side of virtue, do not bring men over to that side? Although heaven and hell were but a *may be*, even this would determine the will to holiness, could it be determined by reason. Yet so far is it from this, that men *knowing the judgment of God, that they who do such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

2. Let those who have been truly convinced of the spirituality of the law, speak and tell, if they then found themselves able to incline their hearts toward it. Nay, the more that light shone into their souls, did they not find their hearts more and more unable to comply with it? Yea, there are some who are yet in the devil's camp, that can tell from their own experience, light let into the mind cannot give life to the will, or enable it to comply therewith.

Secondly, There is in the unrenewed will an *aversion to good*. Sin is the natural man's element: and he is as loth to part with it, as the fishes are to come out of the water. He is sick; but utterly averse to the remedy; he loves his disease, so that he loaths the Physician. He is a captive, a prisoner and a slave; but he loves his conqueror, jailor and master: he is fond of his fetters, prison and drudgery, and has no liking to his liberty. For evidence of this aversion to good in the will of man,

Consider, 1. *The untowardness of children.* How averse are they to restraint? Are they not *as bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke*? Yea, it is far easier, to tame young bullocks to the yoke, than to bring young children under discipline. Every man may see in this, as in a glass, that man is naturally wild and wilful; that according to Zophar's observation, *he is born a wild ass's colt*. What can be said more? He is like a colt, the colt of an ass, the colt

colt of a wild ass: a wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at pleasure: in her occasion who can turn her away?

2. What pain and difficulty do men find, in bringing their hearts to religious duties? And what a task is it to the natural man to abide at them? to leave the world but a little, and converse with God? When they are engaged in worldly business or company, time seems to fly and is gone before they are aware. But how heavily does it drive, while a prayer, a sermon or a sabbath lasts? With many the Lord's day is the longest day in the week: and therefore they must sleep longer that morning, and go sooner to bed that night, than ordinarily they do, that the day may be made of a tolerable length. And still their hearts say, *When will the sabbath be gone?*

3. Consider how the will of the natural man *rebels against the light*. Sometimes he is not able to keep it out: but he *loves darkness rather than light*. The outer door of the understanding is broken open; but the inner door of the will remains shut. Corruption and conscience then encounter: till conscience is forced to give back: convictions are murdered, and truth is made and held prisoner in unrighteousness.

4. When the spirit of the Lord is working a deeper work, yet what resistance does the soul make? When he comes, he finds the *strong man keeping the house*, while the soul is fast asleep in the devil's arms: till the Lord awakens the sinner, opens his eyes, and strikes him with terror, while the clouds are black above his head, and the sword of vengeance is held to his breast. But what pains is he at, to put a fair face on a black heart? To shake off his fears, or make head against them? Carnal reason suggests, if it be ill with him, it will be ill with many. When he is beat from this, and sees no advantage in going to hell with company, he resolves to leave his sins: but cannot think of breaking off so soon; there is time enough, and
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he will do it afterwards. When at length he is constrained to part with some sins, others are kept as right-hands or right-eyes. Nay, when he is pressed, that he must needs say before the Lord, he is willing to part with all his idols, yet how long will his heart give the lie to his tongue, and prevent the execution of it?

Thirdly, There is in the will of man a natural proneness to evil. Men are naturally *bent to backsliding from God*: they hang (as the word is) towards backsliding. Leave the unrenewed will to itself, it will chuse sin and reject holiness: and that as certainly, as water poured on the side of a hill, will run downward and not upward.

1. Is not the way of evil the first way, wherein the children of men go? Do not their inclinations plainly appear on the wrong side, while they have not cunning to hide them? As soon as it appears we are reasonable creatures, it appears we are sinful creatures. *Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, till the rod of correction drives it from him.* It is bound in the heart, woven into our very nature: nor will the knots loose; they must be broke afunder by strokes. Words will not do; the rod must be taken to drive it away. Not that the rod of itself will do this; the sad experience of many parents testifies the contrary. And Solomon himself tells you, *Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.* But the rod is an ordinance of God, appointed for that end; which, like the word, is made effectual, by the Spirit's accompanying his own ordinance.

2. How easily are men led into sin! Persuaded to evil, though not to good. Those whom the word cannot draw to holiness, Satan leads to wickedness at his pleasure. To learn doing ill, is always easy to the unrenewed man: but to learn to do good, is as difficult as for the *Ethiopian to change his skin*. Were the will evenly poised between good and evil, one might be embraced with as much ease as the other. But experience testifies, it is not: yea, the

the experience of all ages. How often did the Israelites forsake the almighty God, and dote upon the idols of the nations. But did ever one of those nations forsake their idols, and grow fond of the God of Israel? No, no. Though man is naturally given to change, it is but from evil to evil, not from evil to good. Surely then the will of man stands not in equal balance, but has a cast on the wrong side.

3. Consider how men go on still in the way of sin, till they meet with a stop from another hand than their own. *I hid me, and he went on frowardly in the way of his own heart.* If God withdraws his restraining hand, man is in no doubt which way to chuse. For the way of sin, is the way of his heart: his heart naturally lies that way. As long as God suffereth them, all nations, do *walk in their own way.* The natural man is so fixed in evil, that there needs no more to shew he is off of God's way, than to say, he is upon his own.

Fourthly, There is a natural contrariety, a direct opposition in the will of man to God himself. *The carnal mind is enmity against God: it is not subject to the law of God, neither can be.*

I have a charge against every unregenerate man and woman, to be proved by the testimony of Scripture and their own conscience: namely, that whether they have the form of religion or no, they are heart-enemies to God: to the Son of God, to the Spirit of God, and to the law of God. Hear this, all ye careless souls, that live at ease in your natural state.

1. Ye are enemies to God in your mind. Ye are not as yet reconciled to him. The natural enmity is not slain, though perhaps it lies hid, and ye do not perceive it. Every natural man is an enemy to God, as he is revealed in his word; to an infinitely holy, just, powerful and true Being. In effect, men are naturally haters of God: and if they could, they would certainly make him another than what he is.

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To convince you of this, let me propose a few queries. (1.) How are your hearts affected to the infinite holiness of God? If ye are not partakers of his holiness, ye cannot be reconciled to it. The Heathens, finding they were not like God in holiness, made their gods like themselves in filthiness; and thereby discovered what sort of a god the natural man would have. God is holy. Can an unholy creature love his unspotted holiness? Nay, it is the righteous only that can give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. God is light: can creatures of darkness, and that walk in darkness, rejoice therein? Nay, *every one that doth evil hateth the light*. For what communion hath light with darkness? (2.) How are your hearts affected to the justice of God? There is not a man who is wedded to his sins, but would be content with the blood of his body, to blot that letter out of the name of God. Can the malefactor love his condemning Judge? Or an unjustified sinner a just God? No, he cannot. And hence since men cannot get the doctrine of his justice blotted out of the Bible, yet it is such an eye-sore to them, that they strive to blot it out of their minds: they ruin themselves by presuming on his mercy, *saying in their heart, the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil*. (3.) How are ye affected to the omniscience and omnipresence of God? Men naturally would rather have a blind idol, than an all-seeing God, and therefore do what they can, as *Adam did, to hide himself from the presence of the Lord*. They no more love an omnipresent God, than the thief loves to have the Judge witness to his evil deeds. (4.) How are ye affected to the truth of God? How many hope, that God will not be true to his word? There are thousands that hear the gospel and hope to be saved, who never experienced the new birth, nor do at all concern themselves in that question, whether they are born again, or not? Our Lord's words are plain and peremptory, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*. What then are such hopes, but real hopes that God will

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recal his word, and that Christ will prove a false prophet? (5.) How are they affected to the power of God? None but new creatures can love him for it. Every natural man would contribute to the building another tower of Babel, to hem it in. On these grounds I declare every unrenewed man an enemy to God.

2. Ye are enemies to the Son of God. That enmity to Christ is in your hearts, which would have made you join the *Husbandmen, who killed the heir, and cast him out of the vineyard.* Am I a dog, ye will say, to have so treated my dear Saviour? So said Hazael, in another case. Yet how did he act? Many call him dear; to whom their sins are ten times dearer than their Saviour. He is no otherwise dear to them, than as they abuse his death, for the peaceable enjoyment of their sins: that they may live as they list in this world; and when they die to be kept out of hell. To convince you of this, I will lay before you the enmity of your hearts against Christ in all his offices.

I. Every unregenerate man is an enemy to Christ in his prophetic office. For evidence of this consider,

1. The entertainment he meets with, when he comes to teach souls inwardly by his Spirit. Men do what they can to stop their ears, that they may not hear his voice. *They always resist the Holy Ghost: they desire not the knowledge of his ways.* The old calumny is thrown upon him again, He is mad: why hear ye him? *The Spirit of bondage* is accounted by many mere distraction and melancholy: men thus blaspheming God's work, because they themselves are beside themselves, and cannot judge of those matters.

2. Consider the entertainment he meets with, when he comes to teach men outwardly by his word.

(1.) His written word, the Bible, is slighted. Many lay by their Bibles with their Sunday clothes. Alas! The dust about your Bibles is a witness of

the enmity of your heart against Christ as a prophet. And of those who read them oftner, how few are there that read them, as the word of the Lord to their souls in particular, so as to keep up communion with God therein? Hence they are strangers to the solid comfort of the scriptures; and if at any time they are dejected, it is something else, and not the word of God, which revives their drooping spirits.

(2.) Christ's word preached is despised. Men can without remorse make to themselves one silent sabbath after another. And alas, when they tread his courts how little reverence and awe of God appears on their spirits! Many stand like brazen walls before the word, on whom it makes no breach at all. Nay, not a few are growing worse and worse, notwithstanding precept after precept. What tears of blood are sufficient to lament this? Remember, we are but the voice of one crying. The Speaker is in heaven. Yet ye refuse him that speaketh, and prefer the prince of darkness before the Prince of peace. A dismal darkness overspreads the world by Adam's fall, more terrible than if the sun and moon had been extinguished. And it must have covered us eternally, had not the grace of God appeared to dispel it. But we fly from it, and like the wild beasts, lay ourselves down in our dens. Such is the enmity of the hearts of men, against Christ in his prophetic office.

II. The natural man is an enemy to Christ in his priestly office. He is appointed of the Father a priest for ever, that by his sacrifice and intercession alone, sinners may have access to, and peace with God. But Christ crucified is ever a stumbling-block and foolishness to the unregenerate part of mankind.

None of Adam's children naturally incline to receive the blessing in borrowed robes, but would always climb up to heaven on a thread spun out of their own bowels. They look on God as a great master, and themselves as his servants, that must work

work and win heaven as their wages. Hence when conscience awakes, they think that to be saved, they must answer the demands of the law ; *serve God as well as they can*, and pray for mercy wherein they come short. And thus many come to duties, that never come out of them to Christ.

Indeed the natural man going to God in duties, will continually be found, either to go without a Mediator, or with more mediators than one. Nature is blind and therefore venturous : it puts men on going immediately to God without Christ. Converse with many hearers of the gospel on their hopes of salvation, and the name of Christ will scarce be heard from their mouth. Ask them *how* they think to find the pardon of sin ? They say, they look for mercy, because God is a merciful God : and this is all they have to trust in. Others look for mercy for Christ's sake. But how do they know Christ will take their plea in hand ? " Why they pray, mourn, confess and have great desires." So they have something of their own to recommend them to him. They were never made poor in spirit, and brought empty-handed to Christ, to lay the stress of all on his atoning blood.

III. The natural man is an enemy to Christ in his kingly office.

How unwilling are natural men to submit to the laws and discipline of his kingdom ! However they may be brought to some outward submission to the King of saints, yet sin always retains its throne in their hearts, and they are *serving divers lusts and pleasures*. None but those in whom Christ is formed, do really put the crown on his head. None but these receive the kingdom of Christ within them, and let him set up and put down in their souls as he will. As for others, any lord shall sooner have the rule over them than *the Lord of glory*. They kindly entertain his enemies, and will never absolutely resign themselves to his government.

vernment. Thus you see, the natural man is an enemy to Jesus Christ in all his offices.

3. Ye are enemies to the Spirit of God. He is the spirit of holiness. The natural man is unholy, and loves to be so; and therefore *resists the Holy Ghost*. The work of the Spirit is to *convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgment*. But O! how do men strive to ward off these convictions, as they would a blow that threatened their life! If the Spirit dart them in so that they cannot avoid them, does not the heart say, *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?* And indeed they treat him as an enemy, doing their utmost to stifle their convictions, and to murder these harbingers that come to prepare the way of the Lord into the soul. Some fill their hands with business, to put convictions out of their head, as Cain who fell to building a city. Some put them off with fair promises, as Felix did; some sport or sleep them away. And how can it be otherwise? For it is the work of the holy Spirit, to subdue lusts and burn up corruption. How then can he whose lusts are dear as his life, fail of being an enemy to him?

Lastly, Ye are enemies to the law of God. Tho' the natural man *desires to be under the law*, as a covenant of works, yet as it is a rule of life, he is *not subject to it, neither indeed can be*. For 1. Every natural man is wedded to some sin, which he cannot part with. And as he cannot bring up his inclinations to the law, he would fain bring down the law to his inclinations. And this is a plain, standing evidence, of the enmity of his heart against it. 2. The law set home on the awakened conscience in its spirituality, irritates corruption. It is as oil to the fire, which instead of quenching, makes it flame the more. *When the commandment comes, sin revives*. What reason can be assigned for this, but the natural enmity of the heart against the holy law? We conclude then, that the unregenerate are heart-enemies to God, his Son, his Spirit,

Spirit, and his law; that there is a natural contrariety, opposition and enmity in the will of man, to God himself and his holy will.

Fifthly, The unrenewed will is wholly perverse, in reference to the end of man. Man is a merely dependent being; having no existence or goodness originally from himself: but all he has is from God, as the first cause and spring of all perfection, natural and moral. Dependence is woven into his very nature; so that should God withdraw from him, he would sink into nothing. Since then whatever man is, he is of Him, surely whatever he is, he should be to Him: as the waters which come out of the sea, return thither again. And thus man was created, looking directly to God, as his last end: but falling into sin, he fell off from God, and turned into himself. Now this infers a total apostasy and universal corruption in man. For where the last end is changed, there can be no real goodness. And this is the case of all men in their natural state: they seek not God, but themselves. Hence though many fair shreds of morality are among them, yet *there is none that doeth good, no not one.* For though some of them run well, they are still off the way; they never aim at the right mark. Whithersoever they move they cannot move beyond the circle of self. They seek themselves, they act for themselves: their natural, civil and religious actions, from whatever spring they come, do all run into, and meet in this dead sea.

Most men are so far from making God their end in their natural and civil actions, that he is not in all their thoughts. They eat and drink for no higher end, than their own pleasure or necessity. Nor do the drops of sweetness, God has put into the creatures, raise their souls towards that ocean of delights that are in the Creator. And what are the natural man's civil actions, such as buying, selling, working, but fruit to himself? Yea, self is the highest end of unregenerate men, even in their

religious actions. They perform duties for a name; for some wordly interest; or, at best, in order to escape from hell. They seek not God at all, but their own interest: so that God is only the means, and self their end.

Thus have I given a rude draught of man's will in his natural state, drawn from scripture and our own experience. Now since all must be wrong, where the understanding and will are so corrupt, I shall briefly dispatch what remains.

III The affections are corrupted; wholly disordered and distempered. They are like an unruly horse, that either will not receive, or violently runs away with the rider. Man's heart is naturally a mother of abominations: *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness.* The natural man's affections are wholly misplaced; he is a spiritual monster. His heart is, where his feet should be, fixed on earth: his heels are lifted up against heaven, which his heart should be set on: his face is towards hell, his back towards heaven. He loves what he should hate, and hates what he should love; joys in what he ought to mourn for, and mourns for what he should rejoice in; glories in his shame, and is ashamed of his glory; abhors what he should desire, and desires what he should abhor. If his affections are set on lawful objects, they are either excessive or defective. These objects have either too little of them, or too much. But spiritual things have always too little.

Here is a threefold cord against heaven, not easily broken, a blind man, a perverse will, disordered affections. The mind swelled with pride, says, the man should not stoop; the will opposite to the will of God, says, he will not: and the corrupt affections, rising against the Lord, in defence of the corrupt will, say, he shall not. And thus

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we stand out against God, till we are created anew by Jesus Christ.

IV. The conscience is corrupt and defiled. It cannot do its work, but according to the light it hath to work by. Wherefore seeing *The natural man discerneth not spiritual things*, his conscience is quite useless in that point. It may indeed check for grosser sins, but spiritual sins it discerns not. Thus it will fly in the face of many for drunkenness; who yet have a profound peace, though they live in unbelief, and are utter strangers to *spiritual worship and the life of faith*. And the light of his conscience being faint and languishing, even in the things which it does reach, its incitements to duty, and struggles against sin are very remiss and easily got over. But there is also a false light in the dark mind, which often calls evil good, and good evil. And such a conscience is like a blind and furious horse, which violently runs down all that comes in his way. Indeed whenever conscience is awakened by the spirit of conviction, it will rage and roar, and put the whole man in a consternation. It makes the stiff heart to tremble, and the knees to bow; sets the eyes a weeping, the tongue a confessing. But still it is an evil conscience, which naturally leads to despair: and will do it effectually, unless either sin prevails over it, to lull it asleep, as in the case of Felix: or the blood of Christ prevail over it, sprinkling and *purging it from dead works*.

Thus is man by nature wholly corrupted. But whence came this total corruption of our nature? That man's nature was corrupt the very heathens perceived: but how sin entered they could not tell. But the scripture is very plain on the point. *By one man sin entered into the world. By one man's disobedience many [all] were made sinners.* Adam's sin corrupted man's nature, and leavened the whole lump

lump of mankind. We putrified in Adam as our root. The root was poisoned, and so the branches were invenomed. The Vine became the vine of Sodom, and so the grapes became grapes of gall. Adam by his sin became not only guilty, but corrupt, and so transmitted guilt and corruption to his posterity. By his sin he stripped himself of his original righteousness and corrupted himself. We were in him representatively, as our moral head: we were in him feminally, as our natural head. Hence we fell in him; (as *Levi paid tythes*, when in the loins of Abraham) by his disobedience we were made sinners: his first sin is imputed to us. And we are left without that original righteousness, which being given to him as a common person, he cast off. And this is necessarily followed in him and us, by the corruption of our whole nature: righteousness and corruption being two contraries, one of which must always be in man. And Adam our common father being corrupt, so are we: for *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?*

It remains only, to apply this doctrine. And first, for information. Is man's nature wholly corrupted? Then 1. No wonder the grave opens its devouring mouth for us, as soon as the womb has cast us forth. For we are all in a spiritual sense dead-born: yea, and filthy, Psalm xiv. 3, noisome, rank and stinking, as a corrupt thing: so the word imports. Let us not complain of the miseries we are exposed to at our entrance, or during our continuance in the world. Here is the venom that has poisoned all the springs of earthly enjoyments. It is the corruption of human nature, which brings forth all the miseries of life.

2. Behold here as in a glass, the spring of all the wickedness, profaneness and formality in the world. Every thing acts agreeably to its own nature; and so corrupt man acts corruptly. You need not wonder at the sinfulness of your own heart

heart and life, nor at the sinfulness and perverseness of others. If a man be crooked, he cannot but halt; and if the clock be set wrong, how can it point the hour right?

3. See here, why sin is so pleasant, and religion such a burden to men: sin is natural; holiness not so. Oxen cannot feed in the sea, nor fishes in the fruitful field. A swine brought into a palace would prefer the mire. And corrupt nature tends ever to impurity.

4. Learn from hence the nature and necessity of regeneration. First, the nature: it is not a partial, but a total change. Thy whole nature is corrupted. Therefore the whole must be renewed. All things must become new. If a man who had received many wounds, were cured of all but one, he might still bleed to death. It is not a change made by human industry, but by the almighty Spirit of God. A man must be *born of the Spirit*. Our nature is corrupt, and none but the God of nature can change it. Man may pin a new life to an old heart; but he can never change the heart. Secondly, the necessity: it is absolutely necessary in order to salvation. *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*. No unclean thing can enter the New Jerusalem; but thou art by nature wholly unclean. Deceive not thyself: no mercy of God, no blood of Christ, will bring an unregenerate sinner to heaven. For God will never open a fountain of mercy, to wash away his own holiness and truth; nor did Christ shed his precious blood, to blot out the truths of God. Heaven! What would you do there, who are not born again? A holy head, and corrupt members! A head full of treasures of grace; members filled with treasures of wickedness! Ye are no ways adapted to the society above, more than beasts to converse with men. Could the unrenewed man go to heaven, he would go to it no otherwise,
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than now he comes to the duties of holiness, that is, leaving his heart behind him.

We may apply this doctrine, Secondly, for lamentation. Well may we lament thy case, O natural man; for it is the saddest case one can be in, out of hell. It is time to lament for thee: for thou art dead already, dead while thou livest. Thou carriest about a dead soul in a living body; and because thou art dead, canst not lament thy own case. Thou *hast no good in thee*: thy soul is a mass of darkness, rebellion and vileness before God. Thou *canst do no good*: thou canst do nothing but sin. For thou art *the servant of sin*, and therefore free from righteousness: thou dost not, canst not meddle with it. Thou art *under the dominion of sin*, a dominion where righteousness can have no place. Thou art a child and a servant of the devil, as long as thou art in a state of nature. But to prevent any mistake, consider that Satan hath two kinds of servants. There are some employed, as it were, in coarser work. These bear the devil's mark in their foreheads having no form of godliness, not so much as performing the external duties of religion, but living apparently as sons of earth, only minding earthly things. Whereas others are employed in more refined work, who carry his mark in their right-hand, which they can and do hide by a form of religion, from the view of the world. These sacrifice to the corrupt mind, as the other to the flesh. Pride, unbelief, self-pleasing, and the like spiritual sins, prey on their corrupted, wholly corrupted souls. Both are servants of the same house, equally void of righteousness.

Indeed how is it possible thou shouldst be able to do any thing good, whose nature is wholly corrupt? *Can an evil tree bring forth good fruit? Do men gather grapes of thorns?* If then thy nature be totally evil, all thou dost is certainly so too.

Hear

Hear, O sinner, what is thy case. Innumerable sins compass thee about : floods of impurities overwhelm thee. Sins of all sorts roll up and down in the dead sea of thy soul ; where no good can breathe, because of the corruption there. Thy lips are unclean : the opening of thy mouth is as the opening of a grave, full of stench and rottenness. Thy natural actions are sin : for *when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?* Zach. vii. 6. Thy civil actions are sin. Prov. xxi. 4, *The plowing of the wicked is sin.* Thy religious actions are sin. *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.* The thoughts and imaginations of thy heart are *only evil continually.* A deed may be soon done, a word soon spoken, a thought pass ; but each of these is an item in thy accounts. O sad reckoning ! As many thoughts, words, actions, so many sins : and the longer thou livest, thy accounts swell the more. Should a tear be dropt for every sin, thine eyes must be fountains of tears. For nothing but sin comes from thee : thy heart frames nothing but evil imaginations : there is nothing in thy life, but what is framed by thy heart ; therefore there is nothing in thy heart or life but evil.

And all thy religion, if thou hast any, is lost labour, if thou art not born again. Truly then thy duties are sins. Would not the best wines be loathsome in a foul vessel ? So is the religion of an unregenerate man. Thy duties cannot make thy corrupt soul holy ; but thy corrupt heart makes them unclean. Thou wast wont to divide thy works into two sorts ; to count some good and some evil. But thou must count again, and put all under one head ; for God writes on them all, *Only evil.*

And thou canst not help thyself. What canst thou do to take away thy sin, who art wholly corrupt ? Will mud and filth wash out filthiness ? And wilt thou purge out sin by sinning ? Job took a potsherd to scrape himself, because his hands
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were as full of boils as his body. This is the case of thy corrupt soul, so long as thou art in a state of nature. Thou art poor indeed, extremely *miserable and poor*; thou hast no shelter, but a *refuge of lies*: no garment for thy soul, but filthy rags; nothing to nourish it, but husks that cannot satisfy. More than that, thou hast got such a bruise in the loins of Adam, that thou art without strength, unable to do any thing. Nay, more than all this, thou canst not so much as seek aright, but liest helpless, as an infant exposed in the open field.

O that ye would believe this sad truth. How little is it believed in the world? Few are concerned to have their evil lives reformed; but fewer far, to have their evil nature changed. Most men know not what they are; as the eye, which seeing many things, never sees itself. But until ye know every one *the plague of his own heart*, there is no hope of your recovery. Why will ye not believe the plain testimony of scripture? Alas! That is the nature of your disease. *Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable and poor and blind and naked.* Lord open their eyes, before they lift them up in hell, and see what they will not see now!

Mean time let us have a special eye upon the corruption and sin of our nature. What avails it to take notice of other sins, while this mother sin is unnoticed? This is a weighty point; in speaking to which I shall

1. Point at some evidences of men's overlooking the sin of their nature. As 1. Men's being so confident of themselves, as if they were in no danger of gross sins. Many would take heinously such a caution as Christ gave his apostles, *Take heed of surfeiting and drunkenness.* They would be ready to cry out, am I a dog? It would raise the pride of their heart, not their fear and trembling. And all this is a proof, that they know not the corruption of their own nature. (2.) Untenderness toward them that fall. Many in this case cast off all
bowels

bowels of compassion : a plain proof that they do not know or *consider themselves, lest they also be tempted.* Grace indeed does make men zealous against sin in others, as well as in themselves. But eyes turned inward to the corruption of nature, clothe them with pity and compassion, and fill them with thankfulness, that they were not the persons left to be such spectacles of human frailty. (3.) Men's venturing so boldly on temptation, in confidence of their coming off fairly. Were they sensible of the corruption of their nature, they would beware of entering on the devil's ground : as one girt about with bags of gunpowder, would be loth to walk where sparks of fire were flying.

2. I shall mention a few things, in which ye should have a special eye to the sin of your nature. (1.) In your application to Christ. When you are with the physician, O forget not this disease. They never yet knew their errand to Christ, who went not to him for the sin of their nature ; for his blood to take away the guilt, and his Spirit to break the power of it. Though ye should lay before him a catalogue of sins, which might reach from earth to heaven, yet if you omit this, you have forgot the best part of the errand a poor sinner has to the Physician of souls. (2.) Have a special eye to it in your repentance. If you would repent indeed, let the streams lead you up to the fountain, and mourn over your corrupt nature, as the cause of all sin, in heart, word and work. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight. Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* (3.) Have a special eye to it in your mortification. *Crucify the flesh with its affections and desires.* It is the root of bitterness which must be struck at ; else we labour in vain. In vain do we go about to purge the streams, if we are at no pains about the muddy fountain. (4.) Ye are to eye this in your daily walk. He that would

walk uprightly, must have one eye upward to Jesus Christ, another inward to the corruption of his own nature.

III. I shall offer some reasons, why we should especially observe the sin of our nature.

1. Because of all sins it is the most extensive and diffusive. It goes through the whole man and spoils all. Other sins marr particular parts of the image of God; but this defaces the whole. It is the poison of the old serpent cast into the fountain, and so infects every action, every breathing of the soul.

2. It is the cause of all particular sins, both in our hearts and lives. *Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, and all other abominations.* It is the bitter fountain, and particular lusts are but rivulets running from it, which bring forth into the life a part only, not the whole of what is within.

3. It is virtually all sins: for it is the seed of all, which want but the occasion to set up their heads. Hence it is called *a body of death*, as consisting of the several members which constitute that body of sins, Col. ii. 11. whose life lies in spiritual death, It is the cursed ground, fit to bring forth all manner of noxious weeds. Never did every sin appear in the conversation of the vilest wretch that ever lived. But look into thy nature, that thou mayst see all and every sin in the root thereof. There is a fulness of all unrighteousness there: atheism, idolatry, adultery, murder. Perhaps none of these appear to thee in thy heart: but there is more in that unfathomable depth of wickedness than thou knowest.

4. The sin of our nature is of all sins the most fixt and abiding. Sinful actions are transient, tho' the guilt and stain of them may remain. But the corruption of nature passes not away. It remains
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in its full power, by night and by day, at all times, till nature is changed by converting grace.

You may observe three things in the corrupt heart. (1.) There is the corrupt nature, the evil bent of the heart, whereby men are unapt for all good, and fitted for all evil. (2.) There are particular lusts or dispositions of that corrupt nature, such as pride, passion, covetousness. (3.) There is one of these stronger than all the rest. *The sin which doth so easily beset us.* So that the river divides into many streams, whereof one is greater than the rest. The corruption of nature is the river-head, which has many particular lusts wherein it runs; but it mainly disburdens itself into that which we call the *predominant sin*. But as in some rivers the main stream runs not always in the same channel, so the besetting sin may change, as lust in youth may be succeeded by covetousness in old age. Now what does it avail, to reform in other things, while the reigning sin retains its full power? What if a particular sin be gone? If the sin of our nature keep the throne, it will set up another in its stead: as when a water course is stopt in one place, it will break forth in another. Thus some cast off their prodigality; but covetousness comes in its stead. Some quit their profaneness; but the same stream runs in the other channel of self-righteousness.

That you may have a full view of the sin of your nature, I would recommend to you three things. (1.) Study to know the spirituality and extent of the law of God; for that is the glass wherein you may see yourselves. (2.) Observe your hearts at all times: but especially under temptation. Temptation is a fire that brings up the scum of the unregenerate heart. (3.) Go to God through Jesus Christ, for illumination by his Spirit. Say unto him, *What I know not, teach thou me*: and be willing to take in light, from the word. It is by the word the Spirit teacheth; but unless he teach, all other teaching is to little purpose. You will never
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see yourself aright, till he light his candle in your breast. Neither the fulness and glory of Christ, nor the corruption and vileness of our nature, ever were or can be rightly learned, but where the Spirit of Christ is the teacher.

To conclude: let the consideration of what has been said, commend Christ to you all. Ye that are brought out of your natural state, be humble; still coming to Christ, still cleaving to him, for the purging out what remains of your natural corruption. Ye that are yet in your natural state, what will ye do? Ye must die: ye must stand at the judgment seat of God. Will you lie down, and sleep another night at ease in this case? See ye do it not. Before another day you may be set before his dreadful tribunal, in the grave-clothes of your corrupt state, and your vile souls cast into the pit of destruction, to be for ever buried out of God's sight. For I testify unto you, there is no peace with God, no pardon, no heaven for you in this state. There is but a step betwixt you and eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord. If the brittle thread of life, which may be broke with a touch, in a moment, or ever you are aware, be broken while you are in this state, you are ruined for ever, and without remedy. But come ye speedily to Jesus Christ. He hath cleansed as vile souls as yours. *Confess your sins*; and he will both *forgive your sins, and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.*

F I N I S.